

Environmental Impacts

The BLM considered all of the following elements of the human environment when analyzing the impacts of the proposed land tenure and ACEC designation amendments to the existing land use plans (Magic MFP, Bennett Hills/Timmerman Hills MFP, Sun Valley MFP, Monument RMP, and Jarbidge RMP). Some of the listed elements of the human environment are subject to specific requirements specified in statutes, regulations, executive orders, or policy (see Appendix 2, Part A, page 125). Others are included because they are among the resources and land uses managed by the Shoshone Field Office. Elements checked with an “x” are not affected (or are only minimally affected) by either the lands or ACECs portions of the proposed amendments and are therefore not analyzed in this chapter. A brief rationale for why certain elements are not affected (or are only minimally affected) by either the lands and/or the ACECs portion of the amendments is provided in Appendix 2, Part B (pp. 126-127).

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air Quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Status Species (threatened, endangered, sensitive, candidate, proposed)
<input type="checkbox"/> Floodplains/Wetlands/Riparian Areas*	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Prime/Unique Farm Lands	<input type="checkbox"/> Wilderness Study Areas
<input type="checkbox"/> Existing ACECs/Natural Areas	<input type="checkbox"/> Wild and Scenic Rivers
<input type="checkbox"/> Native American Religious Concerns/Traditional Uses	<input type="checkbox"/> Soil Resources
<input type="checkbox"/> Tribal Rights/ Indian Trust Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Water Quality (Drinking or Ground)
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Off-highway Vehicle Use
<input type="checkbox"/> Paleontological Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Cave Resources
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental Justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Visual Resources
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wastes (Hazardous or Solid)	<input type="checkbox"/> Forest Resources
<input type="checkbox"/> Economic/Social Values	<input type="checkbox"/> Mineral Resources
<input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Special Designations (National Monument, Wilderness, National Recreation Trails)
<input type="checkbox"/> Availability of Access/Need to Reserve Access	<input type="checkbox"/> Fisheries
<input type="checkbox"/> Livestock Grazing/Rangeland Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation Use, Existing and Potential
<input type="checkbox"/> Invasive/Non-native Species	<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetation Types/Communities
	<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural Entry

*Mitigated effects are described in Appendix 2, Part B.

Table 5 displays the environmental impacts of the land tenure and management actions proposed in the amendments. The left-hand column lists the affected resources or programs, while the remaining four columns describe the impacts of each alternative to those resources or programs. Table 6 discusses the environmental impacts of the seven ACEC designations proposed in these amendments.

Table 5 - Environmental Impacts of Proposed Land Tenure Adjustment and Lands Management Actions

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
Assumptions of Analysis	BLM lands disposed of would go into State, county, or private ownership and would be utilized for agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, Recreation and Public Purposes, or infrastructures (such as roads and power lines for the local communities). It is assumed that, to the extent possible, all development would take place in accordance with local zoning and land use ordinances and would be in conformance with State, local, and Federal environmental protection regulations. It is also assumed that the lag time from actual land tenure adjustment initiation to development for any one parcel or area could be up to ten years or longer, thus giving community infrastructure time to grow and still provide adequate services.			
	The BLM has no existing land exchange proposals for the disposal tracts currently identified in the existing land use plans. Therefore, an assumption can be made that the lands currently identified for potential disposal are not lands that members of the public are interested in acquiring.	The BLM's Shoshone Field Office has a limited number of staff to complete land tenure adjustment actions. Therefore, only a limited number of sales and/or exchanges would take place if the required work was accomplished with only BLM employees and funding. Over the planning horizon of approximately twenty years, it is anticipated that through partnerships, the potential number of exchanges realized will actually be higher. Local counties have expressed an interest in helping the BLM to meet their constituents' expectations. Private individuals have also indicated a willingness to assist the BLM in completing sales and /or exchanges. Therefore, with outside support and partnering, the number of sales and/or exchanges per year may increase. Combining several small parcels into a single sale and/or exchange may also increase the BLM's ability and provide the opportunity to acquire high value resource lands in a timely manner.		

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<i>Access</i>	Current management direction to retain existing public access ensures that existing access will continue to be available to public lands users. Acquisition of public access is currently a low priority, and most access is acquired in conjunction with other actions. The need for public access has increased, however. As private lands are developed, landowners seek access to their properties; the general public land user also seeks access to public lands for various purposes (mostly recreational). Existing management provides limited opportunity to increase public access through land exchanges, since few public lands are identified for disposal, and the identified lands do not appear to be in public demand. It is therefore likely that the demand for public access will continue to exceed the availability of access.	Parcels that provide public or administrative access to larger blocks of public land are identified as a high priority for retention or acquisition. This action will help focus the lands program on those land tenure adjustments that provide the greatest benefit in terms of access and other benefits (such as improved manageability or high resource values). The emphasis on protecting the access area (e.g., parking area adjacent to a trailhead) and associated resources from adverse impacts will help ensure that newly acquired access meets public or administrative needs, with a minimum impact to the public lands. Coordinating access needs and priorities with the Tribes, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, and local governments would ensure that the Tribes have access to their traditional use areas on public lands, address the Tribes' concerns for protecting sensitive areas, address concerns about wildlife and their habitat needs, and address the concerns of local governments. The emphasis on acquiring legal access (versus merely providing physical access) ensures those public benefits will be secured for the long term.		
		Limiting the acquisition of new public access to the minimum number of sites required to access large blocks of public land would result in fewer new public access points than Alternative 3. The potential would exist for excessive use on those newly acquired areas, even though the BLM would make every effort to choose access points that minimize impacts. As under Alternative 1, the demand for public access would likely continue to exceed the supply of public access.	Pursuing a balance of public and BLM administrative access would allow the BLM to improve access to more parcels than under Alternative 2, since administrative access is less expensive to acquire than public access. In addition, this alternative's focus on land exchanges to consolidate public lands, improve management efficiency, and manage by a watershed approach, would eventually block up lands ownership in the planning area so there would be less need for public or administrative access.	Same as Alternative 2. In addition, pursuing BLM administrative access would enable the BLM to improve access to more parcels than under any other alternative, since administrative access is less expensive to acquire than public access. Increased administrative access would allow the BLM to better manage public lands resources.

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<i>Areas of Critical Environmental Concern</i>	Existing law and policy (e.g., FLPMA and related policy) preclude taking any land tenure adjustment or other lands action that would cause significant adverse impacts to any of the values that were identified under the relevance and importance criteria for a designated ACEC.			
	Existing policy precludes the disposal of public lands within a designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern. Existing management direction would also limit the BLM's ability to acquire non-public lands adjacent to or within an ACEC in order to improve management efficiency or acquire high resource values. Tracts that are currently identified for potential disposal may not necessarily interest land owners who would be willing to participate in a land exchange.	The proposed amendments place all existing ACECs in lands management Zone 1; these lands would be retained in public ownership and would not be available for disposal. The proposed land tenure adjustment criteria emphasize acquisition of inholdings within existing ACECs and lands adjacent to and important for expansion of those ACECs. In addition, the proposed Camas Creek ACEC designation specifically states a management action to do so. Over time this management should improve the quality of resources within the affected ACECs by improving management efficiency and through acquisition of high resource values.		

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<i>Cultural Resources</i>	Proposed land tenure adjustments and lands management actions would be subject to compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The Act requires the BLM to identify archaeological and historic properties eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places and to determine if these properties would be affected by a specific action. The BLM also recognizes that American Indians may ascribe religious and/or traditional cultural values to these properties and Tribal consultation would be necessary.			
	In general, where significant historic properties are located, they would be excluded from transfer out of Federal ownership. However, In certain instances, through appropriate mitigation, some properties may be eligible for transfer from Federal ownership. Identification and evaluation of these properties, determination of effect, and the development of mitigating measures would only take place in consultation with the Idaho State Historic Preservation Officer, affected Tribes, and other interested parties. These actions would take place in association with separate NEPA analyses and decisions on a case-by-case basis.	Same as Alternative 1. In addition, the plan amendments identify significant cultural resources, lands eligible for inclusion on the National Register, and National Historic Trails as a high priority for retention, acquisition, or acquisition of inholdings. Over time, this lands retention and acquisition emphasis is expected to increase the quality and quantity of cultural resources managed by the Shoshone Field Office, and also improve the BLM's ability to manage these resources effectively and responsibly. Examples of cultural resources that may be acquired include prehistoric and historic sites and additional sections of two National Historic Trails.		

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<i>Economy and Society</i>	<p><i>Land Exchange Priorities:</i> The existing land use plans make few tracts available for disposal, and the tracts available are generally not ones the public is interested in acquiring. Some private land owners have come to rely upon public lands for a portion of their irrigation system or other agricultural practices. These tracts that are currently authorized for agricultural purposes under temporary use permits are not identified for disposal in the existing land use plans; thus, no long term resolutions of the private landowners' needs or the BLM's administrative concerns for managing this program are feasible without a plan amendment to identify additional disposal tracts.</p>	<p><i>Land Exchange Priorities:</i> Alternative 2 would emphasize land exchanges that increase public lands resource values and/or management efficiency. This would result in better-managed, higher resource value public lands for the general public lands user to enjoy, but not as many opportunities to address private landowners' or local communities' needs through land tenure adjustments.</p>	<p><i>Land Exchange Priorities:</i> Alternative 3 would emphasize land tenure adjustments that provide opportunity to consolidate public lands, accommodate the need for community expansion, improve management in areas with existing high resource values, and/or resolve long-standing unauthorized uses. This alternative provides the flexibility to increase resource benefits for the general public lands user, while also addressing the needs of local communities and private landowners.</p>	<p><i>Land Exchange Priorities:</i> Alternative 4 emphasizes disposal of isolated, unmanageable parcels of public lands in order to improve management efficiency and resolve long-standing unauthorized uses. As a result, this alternative would primarily address the needs of private landowners. High resource value lands would not necessarily be retained or acquired, and the land tenure adjustment needs of local communities, the State, and members of the general public would only be addressed if workload priorities allowed.</p>

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<p><i>Economy and Society</i> (continued)</p>	<p><i>R&PP Leases and Patents/ Lands to Support Local Needs:</i> Disposal of lands through the Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) Act or through land exchange could only occur on parcels identified for disposal. Few, if any, of these disposal tracts would enhance or facilitate the community growth, economic development (e.g., recreation and tourism), and infrastructure needs of State, county, and local governments.</p> <p>[continued]</p>		<p><i>R&PP Leases and Patents/Lands to Support Local Needs:</i> More public lands would be available for potential disposal through R&PP patent than under existing management. Acquisition of public lands could potentially benefit counties or towns that wish to provide additional developments for infrastructure and services such as health care, education, development of water resources, and recreation. The proposed amendments may also stimulate some sectors of local economies since more public lands would be available to accommodate economic development.</p> <p>The BLM anticipates that those communities and/or counties that promote the orderly development or use of natural resources and are in need of additional opportunities for economic development and growth of infrastructure would find that the amended planning documents are more consistent with their planning goals and objectives.</p>	<p>[continued]</p>

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<p><i>Economy and Society</i> (continued)</p>	<p><i>R&PP Leases and Patents/ Lands to Support Local Needs (continued):</i> Opportunities to meet the land tenure adjustment needs of government entities in a timely manner (i.e., without a land use plan amendment) would continue to be limited. In order to accommodate the growth and infrastructure needs of communities, the BLM would need to complete costly and inefficient land use plan amendments that identify disposal tracts of interest to the governments.</p> <p>The BLM anticipates that those communities and/or counties that promote the orderly development or use of natural resources and are in need of additional opportunities for economic development and infrastructure growth would increasingly find that the existing planning documents are inconsistent with their planning goals and objectives.</p>	<p><i>R&PP Leases and Patents/ Lands to Support Local Needs (continued):</i> Although some public lands would be allowed for disposal in Zones 2-5, opportunities for communities to acquire public lands to facilitate community growth, economic development, and increased infrastructure would be limited due to this alternative's retention and acquisition priority. Land tenure adjustments through R&PP patents would only be a high priority if the adjustment enabled the BLM to retain high resource value lands (including open space in Zone 5), acquire additional high resource value lands, consolidate public lands, and/or reconnect habitats within priority habitats. However, this alternative's emphasis on "open space" would have an indirect benefit to communities that desire open space for recreational or other purposes.</p>	<p><i>R&PP Leases and Patents/ Lands to Support Local Needs (continued):</i> Alternative 3 emphasizes disposal of public lands in order to accommodate the need for community expansion. Thus, land tenure adjustments through R&PP patent would be a higher priority under Alternative 3 than under Alternatives 2 or 4. In addition, Alternative 3 would prioritize other land tenure adjustments that complement local governments' Master and/or Comprehensive Plans. This alternative would be expected to be most conducive to helping local governments meet their planning goals and objectives.</p>	<p><i>R&PP Leases and Patents/ Lands to Support Local Needs (continued):</i> Although some public lands would be allowed for disposal in Zones 2-4, opportunities for community growth, increased infrastructure, and disposal of unmanageable isolated parcels would be limited due to this alternative's emphasis on private land exchanges. Land tenure adjustments through R&PP patents would only be a high priority if the disposal tract was considered to be isolated and unmanageable. Few of these tracts are likely to be of interest to local communities. In addition, this alternative would not emphasize retention or acquisition of "open space." This alternative would have more potential lands for disposal for community purposes than Alternative 1, but more competing priorities for land tenure adjustment than Alternatives 2 and 3.</p>

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<p><i>Economy and Society</i> (continued)</p>	<p><i>Open Space: Note:</i> The economic and social impacts to the Zone 5 area (see Map 3) are important to Wood River Valley residents, businesses, and visitors, since tourism is the largest industry in the area.</p>			
	<p><i>Open Space:</i> The existing land use plans are silent on the topic of open space. Although no specific priority has been placed on managing public lands in the Wood River Valley to maintain open space, land tenure adjustments completed in that area have generally expanded open space by consolidating public lands ownership. It is unlikely additional land tenure adjustments to expand “open space” would occur in the Wood River Valley area, since few tracts in that vicinity are currently identified for disposal.</p>	<p><i>Open Space:</i> Alternative 2’s emphasis on acquisition of high resource value lands may eventually increase the extent of public lands considered to be “open space.” This would benefit local communities that are interested in retaining and expanding open space. However, generally retaining public lands in Zone 5 as “open space” would limit the tracts in this area that could be made available for disposal to local communities through R&PP patents. Restrictions on existing and new permits, leases, or agreements would potentially limit local development by precluding some authorizations that are needed to expand existing and approve future uses such as power lines, roads, and other facilities desired by local communities. Restricting rights-of-way and prohibiting new access developments may prevent some private landowners from accessing and developing their properties.</p>	<p><i>Open Space:</i> The land tenure actions under Alternative 3 would allow much more flexibility than Alternative 2 for the BLM to maintain or increase “open space” in the Zone 5 area while simultaneously satisfying communities’ needs for infrastructure and economic development. Open spaces would likely increase over time as the BLM uses land exchanges to consolidate public lands. Alternative 3 also provides the greatest opportunity to utilize R&PP patents to achieve public purposes, thereby increasing the likelihood that local communities can achieve their goals for infrastructure and economic development.</p>	<p><i>Open Space:</i> Consideration of “open space” would not be a management emphasis under Alternative 4. Future land use authorizations or land tenure adjustments could decrease the quality and extent of open space in the Wood River Valley. This change could affect visitors’ experiences of the area and possibly affect the local tourism industry. However, Alternative 4’s emphasis on land use authorizations and land tenure adjustments would (1) allow for economic development and expansion and (2) address the interests of local applicants for permits, grants, leases, or agreements.</p>

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<i>Economy and Society</i> (continued)	<i>DLE/Carey Act Applications and Lands Transfer:</i> Disposal of lands through the Carey Act and the Desert Land Entry (DLE) Act can occur only on parcels identified for disposal. No DLE or Carey Act lands were identified for disposal in the existing land use plans; therefore, a land use plan amendment would be required before transfer of ownership could occur in order to resolve the 21 current applications. Existing management means a delay of final action in perpetuity, with no opportunity to complete a final lands transfer to those applicants who have met their requirements.	<i>DLE/Carey Act Applications and Lands Transfer:</i> These amendments would benefit the 21 DLE/Carey Act applicants who have been waiting more than ten years to complete their requirements and ultimately transfer ownership, because the tracts they are interested in would finally be available for disposal. Disposal of these tracts should have no impact to public lands resources, since the lands have already been developed for years. The restriction on new DLE/Carey Act applications should have no impact on future agricultural development, since no applications have been received during the past 10 years and no recent interest in the programs has been demonstrated.		
	<i>Retention/Disposal of Forest Resources:</i> Retaining lands within the commercial timber base in public ownership would maintain the potential for timber sales and their economic value to the local economy. Any additional social or economic impacts from the proposed disposal or acquisition of parcels with forest resources would be analyzed site-specifically when the land tenure adjustment proposal is reviewed.			
	<i>Resolution of Unauthorized Use:</i> Prohibiting the issue of new permits to cross BLM lands for private farming practices would affect private landowners who require a public parcel of land to make a full pivot rotation. These farmers would have to place their pivots in reverse, which is an inefficient and uneconomical practice. This action would, however, reduce the BLM’s administrative workload associated with temporary use permits and thereby increase the time and resources that could be used to address other lands and realty actions of benefit to the general public. It would also maintain more acres of public land in a condition that supports multiple uses, including more diverse wildlife habitat.			

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<i>Forest Resources</i>	<p>The Sun Valley MFP identified public lands with forest resources for transfer to the USFS only. It is unlikely these lands will be transferred, since they were first identified in 1982 and a transfer is still not completed.</p> <p>No public lands in the timber base are currently identified for disposal to the general public; therefore, no further impacts to forest resources would occur from existing land tenure decisions. Note: It should be understood that the commercial timber base within the planning area is very limited and the effect of any of the alternatives is likely to be small.</p>	<p>Public lands in the timber base would be retained; thus there would be no impact to those forest lands (approximately 15,200 acres).</p>	<p>Small, isolated and hard-to-manage parcels within the commercial timber base would be considered for disposal if they meet the disposal criteria. An initial search of the commercial timber base has not discovered any parcels that fit this description. It is unlikely (but not impossible) that future timber base evaluations and designations could identify such parcels. There would be no immediate effect resulting from this decision.</p>	<p>Parcels within the commercial timber base would not be constrained for disposal if they meet the disposal criteria. An initial search of the commercial timber base has not discovered any parcels that fit this description. It is unlikely (but not impossible) that future timber base evaluations and designations could identify such parcels. There would be no immediate effect resulting from this decision.</p>
	<p>Stands of deciduous trees are usually associated with riparian areas or wetlands in the planning area. Because these areas are a high priority for retention or acquisition, it is likely the acreage of deciduous forest stands in the planning area would be maintained or increase over time. It is unlikely that non-commercial conifer stands would be transferred from public ownership, since there is little private interest in developing these lands. They usually occur on steep, north-facing slopes and are difficult to develop in an environmentally-safe manner. Proposed management emphasizes acquisition of high value resources, which may result in opportunity to acquire high value coniferous or deciduous forested habitat.</p>			
<i>Lands Program</i>	<p>The analysis of impacts to the lands program assumes that all alternatives would be funded at the same level. Thus, the absolute number of lands actions that could be completed would remain similar under each alternative. The alternatives would, however, differ in the types of lands actions and land tenure adjustments that would be emphasized.</p>			

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<p><i>Lands Program</i> (continued)</p>	<p><i>State/Private Land Exchanges:</i> The BLM's opportunity to pursue State or private land exchanges would continue to be limited since few parcels are identified for disposal in the existing land use plans. In addition, those parcels identified do not appear to meet the public's needs. It is unlikely that land exchange actions would be completed under existing management.</p> <p>The BLM would continue to be limited in its ability to use land tenure adjustments to improve public lands management and resources.</p>	<p><i>State/Private Land Exchanges:</i> In emphasizing exchanges with the State over private land exchanges, the BLM would be maximizing its opportunities to consolidate large parcels of land and manage those parcels in a consistent manner. This would be the most economical and efficient exchange process as a minimum number of actions would result in large exchanges of property. This emphasis would, however, reduce the priority for completing private land exchanges that may allow the BLM to acquire lands with important watershed attributes, such as perennial water.</p>	<p><i>State/Private Land Exchanges:</i> Pooling numerous small private and State land exchanges into a few efficient, large exchanges whenever possible would increase the efficiency of the land exchange program. Emphasizing public land consolidation and acquisition in high priority watersheds would increase the BLM's opportunity to manage public lands on a watershed basis. The emphasis on both State and private land exchanges would give the BLM more flexibility to use land tenure adjustments to improve public lands management and resources.</p>	<p><i>State/Private Land Exchanges:</i> Emphasizing private land exchanges would likely result in numerous exchange applications for small parcels and a less efficient exchange program than under Alternatives 2 or 3. The increased availability of lands for disposal to private landowners would likely contribute to an increased workload and decreased response time for all land tenure adjustment actions. The results would be a slower consolidation of public land and decreased responsiveness to potential State exchanges and other lands actions of potential interest to the general public. Although private landowners' concerns would be resolved through exchanges (and some lands of value to the public may be acquired), other lands actions may not be addressed due to limited resources.</p>

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<i>Lands Program</i> (continued)	<p><i>Sales:</i> Land exchanges would continue to be a higher priority than sales for completing land tenure adjustments. It is unlikely that any sales would occur under existing management, since the identified disposal tracts do not appear to meet the public's needs.</p>	<p><i>Sales:</i> Land exchanges would still be a higher priority than sales for completing land tenure adjustments. Prohibiting the disposal of public lands within Zone 1 would provide continued management of those lands for their special uses, thereby benefitting the resources and values associated with the Zone 1 areas. Disposal of public lands through land sales is a low priority in Zones 2 and 3; the most benefit would occur with the sale of isolated parcels. Disposal would benefit landowners who have small pieces of public lands in the middle of their private lands, by allowing consolidation of the public lands into private land uses. Zone 4 would have the greatest flexibility for lands disposals through sale (and exchange) initiatives. Long term unauthorized uses within Zone 4 could potentially be resolved through sale, relieving the BLM of the responsibility of managing small pieces of public lands over the long term. This resolution would benefit the permittee by allowing for the consolidation of the permitted land use into the private land operation. In Zone 5 (classified as Zone 3 lands under Alternative 5) the sale of isolated parcels resulting from mining patents and resurvey would benefit public lands management because these parcels are for the most part inaccessible and/or unmanageable.</p>		
		<p>Alternative 2 would only allow sales in Zone 5 if they are small, isolated parcels left from mining patents or resurvey, thus potentially affecting private land owners in that zone who have parcels meeting their needs but do not meet the two requirements. For example, a landowner may currently hold a right-of-way across public lands for their driveway, but would prefer to own the land.</p>	<p>Alternative 3 provides the flexibility to consider land sales as an option for improving management efficiency and managing according to a watershed approach. Public lands isolated because of features such as roads and canals could be considered for disposal through sale, thus potentially benefitting the adjacent landowners and improving the BLM's management efficiency.</p>	<p>Alternative 4 allows the greatest amount of flexibility to dispose of public lands through sale. Isolated public lands that meet the land tenure adjustment criteria could be disposed of through sale if the sale would address the needs of the private landowner. Disposal of isolated parcels would increase the manageability of the remaining public lands and reduce the use and administration of permits.</p>

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<p><i>Lands Program</i> (continued)</p>	<p><i>Aquifer Recharge Sites:</i> The Magic Valley has been built around water systems developed many years ago. Agricultural transportation systems have improved from furrow ditches to various sprinkler systems. Meanwhile, however, the amount of water has remained stable and the main canals still leak from 10 to 30%. Uses have increased in terms of acres irrigated, numbers of domestic wells, and municipality growth. To insure a stable water supply, the State of Idaho and special interests are proposing recharge sites to maintain the aquifer at a level to maintain the public's needs. The BLM has potential recharge sites and there are also numerous sites on private lands within the planning area. The recharge sites usually occur along major canals or rivers, as sources of water from either flood conditions or after the farming season and before freezing temperatures. The social, economic, and biological impacts of these sites are a major concern to both industry and environmental interests.</p> <p>The BLM currently authorizes one recharge site (in the Shoshone Wilderness Study Area) with a long-term Cooperative Agreement. The existing authorized site would continue to be authorized and monitored in terms of the Agreement and the WSA Interim Management Plan as long as the reasons for special designation are not impacted. This authorization should have no additional impact to the lands program.</p> <p>One pending pilot project right-of-way along the Milner-Gooding Canal is expected to be authorized in the near future. This pilot project would assess the impacts from the recharge site (e.g., monitoring wells would evaluate the content of chemicals in the water) and help determine future use of recharge sites. This use would require extensive coordination with State, Federal, and private organizations involved in the recharge program, as well as bi-annual or more frequent compliance and monitoring checks. If this project is determined to be acceptable, multiple applications would likely be made for recharge sites within the Shoshone Field Office and State-wide.</p>			
	<p>Authorizing the pending recharge site and future sites under rights-of-way would likely consume the time and resources of the lands program, leaving little time or resources available for other lands related work. The pilot site and future rights-of-way that might be authorized under this alternative, would be managed and monitored in accordance with the appropriate right-of-way stipulations.</p>	<p>The BLM would prefer to transfer ownership of potential recharge sites to the State for management into the future. Transferring ownership would reduce the BLM's administrative workload, since those sites kept in BLM ownership would require frequent monitoring and compliance checks. The proposed amendments would allow transfer of sites that are approved by the BLM through appropriate environmental documentation.</p> <p>The BLM anticipates that the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) will implement a major aquifer recharge program. The State of Idaho may be required to complete a single EIS to address all of the issues and sites. The BLM would be able to exchange with the State the pending recharge site along the Milner-Gooding Canal and those parcels in Zones 2 and 4 that are proposed on BLM lands for use and analyzed in the EIS, to allow IDWR the ability to develop and manage the sites on State land versus through long-term authorizations from the BLM. Transferring ownership rather than maintaining long term authorizations would reduce the amount of time, personnel, and expense the BLM would incur. More resources and personnel would be available to work on other lands actions.</p>		

Identified Issue - Land Tenure Affected Resource/Program	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
Lands Program (continued)	<p><i>Resolution of Unauthorized Use:</i> Administration of temporary use permits is a huge workload that takes time away from other public demand actions. Most temporary use permits have been renewed every three years while awaiting the outcome of a prior planning effort and now these proposed amendments. The permits are a low priority, except for compliance and evaluation checks when a permit is up for renewal. Long-term permit compliance is low, and site rehabilitation (if a permit is relinquished) is difficult without close supervision and irrigation. Other issues include noxious weed infestation due to soil disturbance and tilling practices. Because these parcels have already been developed for years, no additional resource impacts are expected. Management of the sheer number of parcels involved and the low revenue they generate have resulted in a reduced priority for the program.</p> <p>[continued]</p>	<p><i>Resolution of Unauthorized Use:</i> After the amendments become final, existing unauthorized use permits would be evaluated for disposal. If disposal is allowed under the specified criteria, the tracts would be offered to the permit holder in the levels of priority indicated in the alternative selected.</p>		
		<p>If disposal is not allowed, the permits would be closed and the permittee would be required to rehabilitate the public lands. This would make the affected lands once again available for multiple use management. Because many of these lands are isolated, management of these lands would continue to be difficult for both the BLM and the private landowner. Impacts to private landowners would vary depending on how much they rely upon public lands and the expense they incur to rehabilitate the lands.</p>		<p>Resolution of unauthorized use through land tenure adjustment would be the highest priority under Alternative 4. This alternative also emphasizes disposal through sale, which would enable private landowners to acquire the lands they are interested in more quickly than through land exchanges. It is therefore expected that most unauthorized uses would be resolved through disposal, which would consolidate management of some public and private lands. Long term permits could be authorized for private use of the lands that are not disposed of (some tracts may not meet required criteria for disposal). This would allow current users to continue their land uses.</p> <p>[continued]</p>
		<p>Individuals with current land use authorizations would be allowed to acquire the permitted public lands through exchange (first priority) or sale (lower priority) if the lands meet the adjustment criteria in Appendix 1. However, processing these disposal actions would be a low priority. In addition, it may be difficult for private landowners to offer lands that the BLM is interested in acquiring through exchange. It is therefore likely that the majority of permits would be retired and rehabilitated prior to the time a land tenure adjustment could be completed.</p>	<p>Resolution of unauthorized use through land tenure adjustment (exchange or sale) would be a greater priority than under Alternative 2. These actions would be incorporated into the lands and realty workload through the annual work plan process as the affected sites are evaluated and determined to be suitable for disposal. It is therefore expected that some uses would be resolved through disposal, which would consolidate management of some public and private lands.</p>	

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<p><i>Lands Program</i> (continued)</p>	<p><i>Resolution of Unauthorized Use (continued):</i> Existing permits may continue to be authorized as long as they meet current policy when the permit is renewed. However, it is expected the majority of permittees would have to discontinue their permitted use because of the current water rights policy. (The property owner (BLM) must hold the water right for the duration of the permit, and the permit holder may not want to transfer this right.)</p> <p>The impacts to private landowners would vary depending on how much they rely on public lands for their agricultural enterprise. Most permit holders want to acquire the lands they are currently using. Land tenure adjustment is unlikely to occur under existing management, however, since few of the permitted parcels are currently identified for disposal.</p>			<p><i>Resolution of Unauthorized Use (continued):</i> Over time, transfer of ownership and long term authorizations are expected to reduce the presently high workload needed to administer numerous short-term permits. This would leave more time and resources available to complete other types of lands and realty actions.</p>

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<i>Lands Program</i> (continued)	<i>Communication Sites:</i> Continuing the existing communication site authorizations would not involve any new issues, concerns, or impacts to public lands or the lands program. The State of Idaho would not be able to acquire lands that would meet their programs and goals.	<i>Communication Sites:</i> The exchange of communications sites could produce an in-holding in some areas (i.e., State lands surrounded by public lands). The current users may eventually have higher rental fees as they are assimilated into the State lands system. New users may be easily accommodated through the State's leasing procedures and would also benefit from having one source for all their needs. Transfer of these sites would reduce revenues received by the BLM. However, the BLM could realize a workload benefit from having fewer communication sites to manage and no longer being responsible for ancillary support associated with the sites. (Since the BLM would be transferring the entire complex, the BLM would be relieved of any needs associated with the site.) Some access roads to communication sites are currently maintained by the BLM. The BLM would no longer have the responsibility of their maintenance and would be able to direct those funds to other projects.		
	<i>Public/Private Boundary Adjustments:</i> Few public/private boundary adjustments are expected to occur under existing management, since the identified disposal tracts do not seem to meet the public's needs.	<i>Public/Private Boundary Adjustments:</i> As lands are disposed of or acquired, new boundaries are established, with a subsequent need to physically identify the new boundaries. Boundary identification is expected to require additional materials, staffing, and time. If new boundaries are not identified, there could be future land use issues such as unintentional unauthorized use. Public/private boundary adjustments could be utilized to resolve situations such as where farming practices border public lands. These adjustments would increase the farmer's management efficiency and conservation of water while resolving cases of unauthorized use.		

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<i>Lands Program</i> (continued)	<i>Split mineral estate:</i> Split mineral estate situations (federal minerals with private surface ownership) are difficult to manage. Under existing management direction, the BLM would have limited ability to acquire high resource value lands or pursue land exchanges to consolidate Federal lands and enhance management because of the limited number of disposal tracts that can be offered in exchange for private lands. This could result in the loss of opportunities to acquire other lands in exchange for the mineral estate of the private surface landowner.		<i>Split mineral estate:</i> An emphasis on eliminating split mineral estate would provide an opportunity for the BLM to acquire high resource value lands while relinquishing sub-surface mineral rights. This would result in a net increase in public lands available for uses such as open space, recreation, grazing, forest management, and wildlife habitat management. This effort will also improve the manageability of the mineral resource and subsequently the BLM's ability to manage parcels where both the surface and subsurface are federally owned.	
<i>Livestock Grazing Program</i>	Existing management identified a limited number of tracts for disposal. No public interest in those tracts has been shown in recent history, indicating it is unlikely those lands would be disposed of. Thus, no impacts to the livestock grazing program are anticipated from existing land tenure decisions.		There may be unquantifiable impacts to the livestock grazing program as a result of land tenure adjustments. Land tenure adjustments may affect the cost or availability of grazing as public lands are exchanged for private or State lands or as public lands are disposed of. Where exchanges with the State are involved, there would be a change in fees and management for the users, depending on ownership in their respective allotments. Currently, BLM grazing fees are less than State fees. The fee impacts would be ascertained on a site-specific basis when the land tenure adjustment proposal is analyzed.	

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<i>Minerals Resources</i>	Current policy direction allows the sale or exchange of mineral rights. However, such transfer of mineral resources (to resolve split estate situations or as an outcome of other lands actions) is unlikely under existing management, since the identified disposal tracts do not appear to meet the public's needs. Thus, no impacts to the minerals resource would be expected from existing land tenure management.		Site-specific mineral reports would be prepared for every proposed land tenure adjustment. (Note: Some land tenure adjustment authorities specifically preclude the disposal of public lands known to be mineral in character. In those situations the lands would remain in public ownership with no effect to minerals resources.) In general, land tenure adjustments would take into account fair market values, including mineral resources. The general fund would be compensated accordingly, with no overall loss to the public-at-large. If the action was under the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act, those funds would be placed in an account available for the purchase of additional lands and not sent to the general fund; this could potentially benefit the public land user since the value of the relinquished minerals resources could be used to acquire high resource value lands of interest to the general public. Land tenure adjustments to eliminate split mineral estate would seek to have a positive impact on both the private surface land owner and the BLM. The impacts of giving up mineral values in exchange for surface resource values would be analyzed in a minerals report when the land exchange transaction is proposed.	

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<i>Paleontological Resources</i>	<p>Existing management does not emphasize retention or acquisition of significant paleontological resources. There is some risk that lands with known or possible paleontological resources could be transferred from public to private ownership. While some protection is given these resources under Federal ownership, no protection is provided under private ownership. The risk of loss of significant known paleontological resources is low, however, since these resources must be considered during the NEPA analysis that would be completed prior to any land tenure adjustment. In addition, it is unlikely any land tenure adjustments would occur under existing management, since the identified disposal tracts do not appear to meet the public's needs.</p>		<p>NEPA only requires full consideration of paleontological resources during the environmental assessment and planning process, whereas these land use plan amendments clarify that areas with significant paleontological resources would generally be retained in public ownership. However, parcels with significant paleontological resources may be exchanged for lands with higher resource values on a case-by-case basis. This presents some risk that significant known paleontological resources could be transferred from public ownership to private ownership. While some protection is given these resources under Federal ownership, no protection is provided under private ownership.</p>	

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<i>Recreation</i>	<p>The Idaho Isolated Wildlife Tract Program would maintain the number of public land parcels intermingled with agricultural areas. As these parcels are managed specifically for hunters and upland bird habitat, recreational hunting opportunities for species like pheasants would be maintained.</p>	<p>The Idaho Isolated Wildlife Tract Program would maintain or increase the number of public land parcels intermingled with agricultural areas. As these parcels are managed specifically for hunters and upland bird habitat, recreational hunting opportunities for species like pheasants would be maintained or increased.</p>	<p>The number of parcels managed under the Isolated Wildlife Tract Program would likely decrease as existing tracts are exchanged for equal or higher wildlife values and in order to consolidate fragmented wildlife habitats. This would reduce public access for hunting and other recreational uses on some lands adjacent to agricultural areas. In most cases this loss would likely be offset by an increase in wildlife habitat and hunting opportunity on the acquired lands.</p>	<p>As the Isolated Wildlife Tracts are disposed of over time (most probably into private ownership with subsequent agricultural or commercial development), it is likely that hiding cover and winter habitat for pheasants and other species would be lost, and a subsequent decline in upland bird habitat would occur. Recreational hunting opportunities would also decrease.</p>
	<p>The current inability to exchange small and/or unmanageable tracts for parcels that would help to consolidate public holdings represents lost opportunities for increased recreational use.</p>	<p>Land exchanges for like or greater values would increase the likelihood that land with recreational values would be retained or acquired, with a subsequent net increase in recreational opportunities on public lands. Emphasis on acquiring legal public access would also increase public land users' opportunities to pursue recreation activities on public lands.</p>		<p>Alternative 4 would not emphasize acquisition of legal public access or the acquisition of public lands with high value resources. Opportunity for recreation on public lands would likely decrease as public lands are transferred into private ownership in order to resolve long term unauthorized uses.</p>

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<i>Native American Religious Concerns/Traditional Uses</i>	Existing law (National Historic Preservation Act, American Indian Religious Freedom Act) directs the BLM to consult with affected tribes on proposed land tenure adjustments (and other actions) and seek to mitigate impacts to Native American religious concerns or traditional uses. This ensures that tribal interests are considered and adverse impacts to those interests are mitigated to the extent possible.	Same as Alternative 1. In addition, the proposed amendments state that lands specifically identified by the Shoshone-Bannock and/or Shoshone-Paiute Tribes as having special importance related to traditional uses and values would be a high priority for retention or acquisition (see Appendix 1). This management action assures that public lands of known importance to the Tribes would be retained in public ownership, and increases the likelihood that the BLM would seek to acquire lands of importance to the Tribes. Proposed management would maintain or increase the acreage of public lands with resource values for tribal subsistence (such as hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering), prehistoric and historic cultural resources (such as sacred sites, religious sites, and archeological resources), and significant caves.		
<i>Riparian Areas/Wetlands</i>	Existing disposal tracts do not appear to meet the public’s needs; therefore, it is unlikely that riparian/wetland areas would either be disposed of or acquired.	Riparian areas and wetlands are identified as a high priority for retention and acquisition. This management emphasis ensures that existing riparian and wetland areas would generally be retained in public ownership. In the rare instance where lands with riparian/wetland values are proposed to be exchanged for lands with even higher resource values, the impacts to the affected riparian or wetland area should always be neutral or positive and would be evaluated during site-specific proposal analysis.		
<i>Soils</i>	There is a potential for loss of soil structure and productivity if a land tenure adjustment results in subsequent development that produces surface disturbance. It is anticipated that such impacts would be addressed on a site-specific basis and that land tenure adjustments would not be considered where there is a potential for significant impacts, unless such impacts could be mitigated to the satisfaction of the authorized officer in accordance with known statutory environmental thresholds.			

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<i>Tribal Rights/ Trust Resources</i>	BLM policy and Presidential direction (Memorandum of April 29, 1994 and Order No. 3175 of November 8, 1993) provide direction for consultation and coordination with Native American tribes to ensure that all anticipated effects on Indian trust resources and tribal rights are addressed in the planning, decision, and operational documents for each proposed project, including lands actions. This ensures that tribal interests are considered and adverse impacts to those interests are mitigated to the greatest extent possible.	Same as Alternative 1. In addition, the proposed amendments state that lands specifically identified by the Shoshone-Bannock and/or Shoshone-Paiute Tribes as having special importance related to treaty and/or traditional use values would be a high priority for retention or acquisition (see Appendix 1). This management action assures that public lands of known importance to the Tribes would be retained in public ownership, and increases the likelihood that the BLM would seek to acquire lands of importance to the Tribes. Over time, proposed management would likely increase the acreage of public lands with trust resource values.		
<i>Water Quality - Drinking and Ground</i>	There is a potential for impacts to surface vegetation and water quality if a land tenure adjustment results in subsequent development that produces surface disturbance. It is anticipated that such impacts would be addressed on a site-specific basis and that land tenure adjustments would not be considered where there is a potential for significant impacts, unless such impacts could be mitigated to the satisfaction of the authorized officer in accordance with known statutory environmental thresholds.			
	Requiring recharge sites to be authorized through the permitting process would reduce the number of future sites that could be considered and managed to benefit the public water supply.	Managing the aquifer recharge program through transfer of environmentally acceptable sites to the State of Idaho would centralize management of those sites and enable sites to be approved on a State-wide basis, with accompanying ecosystem-level environmental analysis. This should result in improved selection of sites and allow for comparative monitoring of water quality impacts. Developing these sites would benefit the people of Idaho by increasing and stabilizing the quality and supply of ground water for agricultural and domestic use.		

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<i>Wild and Scenic Rivers</i>	Neither existing management nor the proposed amendment alternatives would adversely affect the eligibility of the nine identified Wild and Scenic River segments managed by the Shoshone Field Office area. [Note: These nine segments occur within the boundaries of the planning area for the Draft Bennett Hills RMP. The remainder of the Shoshone Field Office has not been inventoried to determine the eligibility of stream segments. Future efforts to determine additional eligible streams within the entire Field Office and to determine suitability on all eligible stream segments will occur when a Shoshone Field Office RMP is initiated. Until the suitability study is completed, all of these eligible WSR are being managed to (a) protect the streams' free-flowing character, (b) maintain the level of development that resulted in the segments' tentative classifications as "wild," "scenic," or "recreational"; and (c) protect the outstandingly remarkable values which qualified the stream segments as eligible for further study.]			
	Existing policies preclude disposal of eligible WSRs or segments. However, existing management direction would also limit the BLM's ability to acquire non-public lands adjacent to or within a WSR in order to improve management efficiency or acquire high resource values. Tracts that are currently identified for potential disposal may not necessarily interest land owners who would be willing to participate in a land exchange.	Eligible Wild and Scenic River segments are identified as a high priority for retention, acquisition, and acquisition of inholdings. If the BLM is able to acquire inholdings, this would likely improve management efficiency and resource values of the affected river segments.		

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<i>Wilderness Study Areas</i>	Existing policies preclude disposal of public lands within any Wilderness Study Area. However, existing management direction would also limit the BLM's ability to acquire non-public lands adjacent to or within WSAs in order to improve management efficiency or acquire high resource values. Tracts that are currently identified for potential disposal may not necessarily interest land owners who would be willing to participate in a land exchange.		The proposed amendments place all existing WSAs in lands management Zone 1; these lands would be retained in public ownership and would not be available for disposal. The proposed amendments would not impair the 14 WSAs (totaling 159,506 acres) that occur in the planning area, since the proposed actions complement guidance contained in the Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review (USDI - BLM, 1995). The proposed lands actions emphasize acquisition of inholdings within existing WSAs; over time this management should improve the quality of resources within the affected WSAs by improving management efficiency and through acquisition of wilderness-related land values.	

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<i>Wildlife</i>	All land tenure actions are subject to a site-specific NEPA analysis and appropriate consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or the National Marine Fisheries Service on issues related to Federally listed species. These provisions ensure that adverse impacts to listed species will be avoided.			
	<i>Isolated Wildlife Tract Program:</i> The Isolated Wildlife Tract Program would continue within the guidelines and direction of the existing planning decisions. The management specified in the Isolated Wildlife Tracts Habitat Management Plan (USDI-BLM 1978) would maintain the habitat values for pheasants, gray partridge, valley quail, sage grouse, and other game and nongame animals which inhabit the tracts.	<i>Isolated Wildlife Tract Program:</i> The Idaho Isolated Wildlife Tract Program would maintain or increase the number of public land parcels intermingled with agricultural areas. This would increase both the number of acres and quality of escape, nesting, brood-rearing, and winter habitat available for raptors, passerine birds (perching birds and songbirds), and upland game birds.	<i>Isolated Wildlife Tract Program:</i> The number of parcels managed under the Isolated Wildlife Tract Program would likely decrease as existing tracts are exchanged for equal or higher wildlife values and in order to consolidate fragmented wildlife habitats. Although small parcels of wildlife habitat would be transferred out of public ownership, the land tenure adjustments would result in a net increase in suitable habitat for some wildlife species and a slight reduction in both wildlife habitat diversity (loss of habitat adjacent to agricultural land) and habitat fragmentation across the planning area. The Isolated Wildlife Tract Program would probably not be eliminated since some parcels would likely be retained due to their specific high resource values.	<i>Isolated Wildlife Tract Program:</i> As disposal of the isolated wildlife tracts occurs (most probably into private ownership with subsequent agricultural or commercial development), it is likely there would be less thermal, escape, nesting, brood-rearing, and winter habitat for pheasants, gray partridge, valley quail, sage grouse, raptors, some passerine birds (perching birds and songbirds), and other game and nongame animals which utilize these isolated parcels. There would be a substantial net decrease in pheasant habitat on public land in the planning area. The expected reduction in upland hunter days and wildlife viewing days would depend on the number of isolated tracts leaving public ownership, their locations, and the type and quality of wildlife habitat on the disposed of tracts.

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<i>Wildlife</i> (continued)	<i>Land Exchanges:</i> The existing disposal tracts do not appear to meet the public's needs, so it is unlikely that land tenure adjustments to connect isolated or fragmented habitat would occur. Wildlife which benefit from connected tracts or corridors of similar habitats would continue to be adversely affected by the broken land ownership pattern in some portions of the planning area.	<i>Land Exchanges:</i> The emphases on acquiring additional high resource value lands, consolidating lands, and reconnecting habitats in priority watersheds would benefit wildlife species which utilize connected tracts or corridors of similar habitats.		<i>Land Exchanges:</i> This alternative would not seek to address the wildlife fragmentation issue by acquiring high resource value lands, although some consolidation of land ownership may occur. Wildlife which benefit from connected tracts or corridors of similar habitats would continue to be adversely affected by the broken land ownership pattern in some portions of the planning area, although potentially to a lesser extent than under Alternative 1.

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<p><i>Wildlife</i> (continued)</p>	<p><i>Land Exchanges (continued):</i> The current inability to exchange small and/or unmanageable tracts for parcels that would help to consolidate public holdings or acquire high value resources represents lost opportunities for effective wildlife habitat management.</p>	<p><i>Land Exchanges (continued):</i> A site-specific analysis conducted for each exchange or disposal proposal would describe the impacts to the affected wildlife species from the planned action. Impacts to special status species would be disclosed and, if necessary, mitigated at that time. Disposal of isolated parcels, especially in Zone 4, is not likely to adversely affect any sensitive species.</p> <p>Private or State land received in exchange for public land may have value as wildlife habitat. However, the acquired land may not have the same value or support the same wildlife species as the disposed of public land. The impacts to the affected wildlife would depend on the species' habitat needs. By referring to the table "General Habitats of BLM Sensitive Bird Species" (see page 21) and weighing the amount and quality of each type of habitat in an exchange or disposal, the relative effect on a BLM Sensitive species may be determined. For instance, exchanging equal amounts of good quality grassland habitat (disposed) for sagebrush habitat (acquired) would have a relative effect of benefitting a greater number of sensitive species. The process would lead to the conclusion that it would be most beneficial to sensitive wildlife for the Shoshone Field Office to concentrate on acquiring sagebrush and riparian habitats.</p> <p>Over time, it is expected that land exchange or disposal actions would alter the amount of suitable habitat available for both resident and neotropical migrant bird species. Shoshone Field Office records show that 95 bird species use the combined sagebrush and grass dominated plant communities in the planning area. The sagebrush and grass communities are used by 76 bird species which breed in the area; 9 make use of grass communities, 53 use sage communities, and 14 make use of a mixture of sage and grass communities. The exchange of a sage-dominated plant community for a grass community would increase the amount of suitable public land habitat for 17 bird species, while acquiring land with sagebrush in exchange for a parcel with a herbaceous plant community would increase the amount of suitable habitat for 62 bird species. Of the 192 neotropical bird species which breed in the area, eight bird species would benefit from the acquisition of grassland habitat and 44 bird species would benefit from the acquisition of sagebrush habitat. One neotropical migrant bird species with wintering populations in the planning area would benefit by the acquisition of grassland habitat, while 20 neotropical migrant species with wintering populations in the planning area would benefit by acquiring sagebrush habitat.</p>		

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
Wildlife (continued)			<p><i>Land Exchanges (continued):</i> Shoshone Field Office records show that 95 bird species use the combined sagebrush and agriculture dominated plant communities in the planning area. Conversion of a sage-dominated community to an agricultural plant community would increase the habitat for 17 bird species and reduce the amount of habitat for 33 bird species. Of the 192 neotropical bird species which breed in the area, 12 bird species would benefit from an increase in the agricultural plant communities and 24 bird species would experience a reduction in the amount of suitable habitat as a result of the vegetation conversion.</p> <p>Increased establishment of agricultural plant communities would benefit three neotropical migrant bird species with wintering populations in the planning area, while six neotropical migrant species with wintering populations in the planning area would be adversely effected by the loss of sagebrush habitat.</p> <p>Acquisition of riparian habitats and the expected improvements in riparian habitat conditions would be beneficial to bird species which make seasonal or yearlong use of riparian plant communities. The bird species most directly affected would be the 60 species whose life cycle needs are provided by riparian and other closely allied habitats.</p> <p>Exchanging lands in Zone 4 for parcels in the other zones may result in a long term loss of habitat for some introduced species (such as ring-necked pheasant and gray partridge), while consolidating habitat for some sensitive species (such as sage grouse and the sage sparrow). This type of trade-off could also result in a decrease in hunting opportunities for the general public near agricultural lands.</p>	

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<i>Cumulative Impacts</i>	<p>The analysis of cumulative impacts includes the consideration of past, present and reasonably foreseeable impacts that could result from a specific action or set of actions. The Magic Valley is dependent on public lands for some social and economic needs. Public lands support programs like agricultural, minerals development, recreation, livestock grazing, and transportation. The Magic Valley is a destination for many people, not only from large metropolitan areas like Boise, but also for out-of-state tourists bound for destinations like Sun Valley and the Craters of the Moon National Monument. It could be reasonably foreseen that as the area continues to grow in population, recreation and tourism will also continue to grow throughout this portion of Idaho.</p>			
	<p><i>Cultural Resources, Paleontological Resources, Tribal Rights/Traditional Uses:</i> Private land development, especially along riparian areas, near caves, and in other areas with high potential for cultural resource sites, paleontological sites, and traditional use areas may lead to a cumulative loss of these values and a loss of opportunity to protect and study these areas as part of the overall history and pre-history of south-central Idaho. These losses on private lands make protection and acquisition of cultural resources, paleontological sites, and traditional use areas on Federal lands even more vital. Existing land tenure management would limit the BLM's ability to acquire and manage these high value resources.</p> <p>[continued]</p>	<p><i>Cultural Resources, Paleontological Resources, Tribal Rights/Traditional Uses:</i> Proposed management would increase the BLM's ability to acquire and manage these resources through private or State land exchanges. Increased emphasis on retaining and managing these resource values on public lands would help offset losses of the resource values from development on private and State lands.</p> <p><i>Economic and Social Impacts:</i> Making BLM management more efficient through amended land tenure adjustment actions and new ACEC designations should improve the public lands opportunities for residents and visitors to the Magic Valley area. Amending the land use plans would provide the ability to contribute to present and future development opportunities, economic growth opportunities, and infrastructure development when requested by the State, county or local officials, or private individuals.</p> <p>Potential exists to add to the resource values of vegetative communities and ecosystem health through interagency implementation of watershed based land tenure management actions. Loss of specific resource values should be offset with equal or better resource values acquired in site-specific actions, especially when using the extensive list of criteria in Appendix 1. Implementation of the pro-active criteria in Appendix 1 would provide more resource emphasis beyond the present land use plans and would not take place until such time as a land tenure action is proposed and approved in a site-specific action. The BLM and potential proponents would be required to show how a specific land tenure action would be beneficial to the public and any affected resources.</p> <p>[continued]</p>		

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<p><i>Cumulative Impacts</i> <i>(continued)</i></p>	<p><i>Economic and Social Impacts:</i> Continuation of existing management is expected to affect the majority of development activities that are currently authorized through land use permits. As permits come up for renewal, many will be terminated because they are not in compliance with current policy for authorization through land use permits. The short term economic impacts to permit holders would include costs to remove the use and rehabilitate the affected area.</p> <p>Existing management is not expected to keep up with local governments' needs for public lands to achieve community growth and improved infrastructure. The BLM's limited inability to utilize land tenure adjustments to acquire high resource value lands and public access may, over time, also affect the rate at which recreation and tourism can grow in the planning area.</p> <p>[continued]</p>	<p><i>Forest Resources:</i> Since coniferous forest lands are generally steep and not desirable for most forms of development, there is a high probability that those lands in the timber base would remain in public ownership. Although extensive logging operations occurred nearly a century ago, the effects of that logging (soil loss, change in overstory, change in species composition) have generally healed to the extent that is possible in such a time period and without significant human intervention. Current management is to increase forest health through thinning over-crowded stands and removing diseased trees. Maintaining forest stands in public ownership will allow long term management to improve forest health in those stands. In the unlikely event that such stands leave the public domain, they could be harvested; this harvest could result in short term economic benefit to the owner and community, but a moderate to long term decrease in ecosystem and wildlife habitat stability.</p> <p>Because coniferous forests in the planning area are generally not desirable to develop (steep slopes), private and State forested lands may be offered to the BLM in exchange for parcels that can be developed. Acquisition of forested habitat adjacent to National Forest lands would increase the acreage of contiguous forested habitat in public ownership.</p> <p><i>Livestock Grazing/Rangeland Resources:</i> The current management goal for public rangelands is to achieve "rangeland health" - i.e., a healthy and diverse ecosystem capable of supporting multiple use. Where transfer to private ownership occurs, the transferred lands may not be managed for rangeland health. However, most transfers to private ownership are expected to occur in Zone 4, which would have only a minor effect on BLM management of rangelands (including the management of sagebrush ecosystems for sensitive species) because of the disjunct nature of lands in that zone. The consolidation of lands in Zones 2 and 3 (especially under Alternatives 2 and 3, which emphasize large land exchanges) would likely <i>increase</i> management efficiency in those areas, leading to a further improvement in rangeland health. In all cases where cheatgrass (or another undesirable species) has become established, it is anticipated that a significant effort in terms of funds, resources, and manpower would be required to restore a native ecosystem. Restoration is more likely under Alternatives 2 and 3, which seek to consolidate ownership, improve management efficiency, and reconnect habitat in priority watersheds, than under Alternative 4, which emphasizes disposal to private landowners.</p> <p>[continued]</p>		

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<i>Cumulative Impacts</i> (continued)	<p><i>Forest Resources/Rangeland Resources:</i> Existing management would limit the BLM’s ability to consolidate and improve management of forest and rangeland habitats on a watershed basis and in cooperation with other land management agencies.</p> <p><i>Recreation:</i> Existing management would limit the BLM’s ability to manage recreation resources and public access on a watershed basis and in cooperation with other land management agencies. The availability of recreation opportunities may not meet the demand for those opportunities.</p> <p>[continued]</p>	<p><i>Recreation:</i> Some aspects of Alternatives 2 and 3 (land consolidation and acquisition) could reasonably be expected to contribute to increased recreation opportunities. Improved recreation opportunities on BLM-managed lands should reduce some of the demand to use private, State, and National Forest lands for recreational purposes. Seeking to acquire public access to large blocks of public land would benefit recreational uses, while focusing impacts on a few small areas that can be more easily managed. The expected increase in recreation use and opportunities could result in damage to resources managed by the BLM unless carefully planned and controlled. For example, increased access and use of vehicles could cause loss of desired vegetation, an increase in noxious weeds, loss of top soil, an increase in human-caused fires, and disturbance of wildlife during critical periods. The risk of these adverse impacts would be reduced as the BLM develops new access in cooperation with the Tribes and State and local governments, and participates in interagency implementation of other watershed management actions.</p> <p>[continued]</p>	<p><i>Recreation:</i> Alternative 4 places limited emphasis on acquisition of public access and lands with high value resources, such as recreation opportunities. Other land tenure adjustment priorities would limit the BLM’s ability to increase recreation resources and public access. The availability of recreation opportunities may not meet the demand for those opportunities.</p> <p>[continued]</p>	

Identified Issue - Land Tenure <i>Affected Resource/Program</i>	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3 (BLM Preferred)	Alternative 4
<i>Cumulative Impacts</i> (continued)	<i>Wildlife:</i> Existing management would limit the BLM's ability to consolidate and improve management of wildlife habitats on a watershed basis and in cooperation with other agencies (e.g., USFS, IDFG, USFWS) and landowners .	<i>Wildlife:</i> Addressing habitat fragmentation by acquiring high resource value lands and consolidating ownership would augment other agencies' (e.g., USFS, IDFG, USFWS) efforts to address the habitat fragmentation issue in priority watersheds. Declines in population levels of some species have resulted in their being managed as special status species by the BLM (including federally listed Threatened and Endangered species). Such population declines are often a direct result of competing land uses and habitat fragmentation. By acquiring and/or consolidating lands with high habitat value for a sensitive species, the likelihood of further population declines would be reduced. More intensive management, as in the proposed ACECs, would likely enhance habitat values, also reducing the potential for further population declines. In combination these actions may assist in preventing some species from becoming Federally listed.		<i>Wildlife:</i> Alternative 4 places little emphasis on acquiring high resource value lands to address habitat fragmentation or the habitat needs of special status species. Although existing habitat for special status species would be retained in public ownership, other land tenure adjustment priorities would limit the BLM's ability to consolidate and improve management of wildlife habitats on a watershed basis and in cooperation with other agencies and landowners.
<i>Irreversible or Irretrievable Commitments of Resources</i>	Any irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources from land tenure adjustments or other lands actions would be disclosed when each project proposal is analyzed. Current or proposed management direction does not, in and of itself, result in an irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources. Every alternative has the potential for an irretrievable commitment of resources through transfer of public lands out of public ownership. Land tenure adjustments are usually irreversible, unless lands previously transferred from public ownership are re-acquired into public ownership. <i>Tribal Rights/Trust Resources:</i> Lands going out of Federal ownership are no longer public resources. Even though the BLM would acquire other lands in exchange for the disposal parcels, the resources and traditional use values/treaty values may not be the same.			
			<i>Wildlife:</i> Disposal of Isolated Wildlife Tracts and public lands lying adjacent to or included within the boundaries of private farming operations would result in the permanent loss of wildlife habitat values if the disposed-of lands are converted to intensive agricultural or commercial uses. The impacts would include permanent loss of native upland plant communities and irrigated wildlife habitat managed for the benefit of raptors, upland game birds, some passerine birds, and other upland wildlife species.	